

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1, 2, 5-13, 17, and 18 are amended and claims 19-20 are added for the Examiner's consideration. The above amendments and added claims do not add new matter to the application and are fully supported by the specification. For example, support for the amendments and added claims is provided in the claims as originally filed and in the specification at pages 2-4. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Objection to Abstract

The Abstract of the disclosure has been objected to for containing the word "comprising". By this amendment, the Abstract has been amended to change the word "comprising" to "including".

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the Abstract be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10, 14, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 4,689,102 issued to Prawdzik et al. ("Prawdzik"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

To anticipate a claim, each and every element as set forth in the claim must be found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. MPEP §2131. Applicants submit, however, that Prawdzik does not show each and every feature of the claimed invention.

Independent claim 1

The present invention relates generally to wood fiberboard and, more particularly, to a floor panel composed of a support board with a decoration. Claim 1 recites:

1. A wood fiberboard, composed of a panel comprising a support board with a top side and an underside, the top side having a decoration, of a wood or tile decoration, wherein the decoration is printed onto the top side of the support board and is covered by at least one layer of a transparent synthetic resin.

Prawdzik does not show these features and therefore does not anticipate independent claim 1.

The Examiner is of the opinion that Prawdzik shows these features in lines 25-65 of column 1 and lines 42-61 of column 8. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Instead, Prawdzik shows a method of producing decorative laminates. More specifically, Prawdzik shows a method for producing assemblies 5 composed of a decorative sheet 9 and core stock 11. The decorative sheet 9 is printed with a decoration and impregnated with resin. The core stock 11 (e.g., kraft paper) is also impregnated with resin. The decorative sheet 9 and core stock 11 are pressed together in a high-pressure press assembly 1, 3 (FIG. 1). A release surface 15 of the press assembly 1, 3 is coated with a resin coating 17, such that during pressing abrasion-resistant particles (e.g., corundum) are transferred to the resin-impregnated decorative sheet (col. 4, lines 20-25; col. 5, lines 5-10 and 40-45). Prawdzik also shows a low-pressure process in which the decorative sheet 9 can be applied to a substrate 37 instead of core stock 11 (FIG. 4). Thus, Prawdzik shows attaching a decorative sheet to a core (e.g., either core stock 11 or substrate 37). Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, however, Prawdzik does not show a support board with a *decoration printed onto the top side of the support board*, as recited in the claimed invention.

In fact, Prawdzik shows what Applicants are already aware of and describe in the Background of the Invention section of the instant application: printing a decoration onto a paper web, coating the paper with resin, and pressing the paper onto a support board. In such a known process, the dimensions of the printed paper (i.e., decorative sheet) may change, causing the paper to be distributed unevenly on floor panels, resulting in the decorations being offset along connecting edges of panels. Decorations that are

only slightly offset are noticeable to an observer, and greatly detract from the aesthetic appeal of the floor. The claimed invention specifically addresses these drawbacks.

The claimed invention comprises a decoration printed *on the support board*. In this manner, there is no printed paper with a decoration. Thus, there is no possibility of the decoration being offset. Prawdzik does not show this, but rather, shows a decoration printed on a sheet 5 that is then attached to the support board (e.g., either core stock 11 or substrate 37). Therefore, Prawdzik does not contain each and every element of claim 1 and does not anticipated the claimed invention.

Independent claim 6

The present invention also relates to a process of producing a wood fiberboard. More particularly, claim 6 recites, in pertinent part:

- ...
- a) a decoration, of a wood or tile decoration printed onto one or two sides of the board;
 - b) a screen roller is used to spread one or more synthetic-resin layers, of melamine-resin or urea-resin layers, on the side with the decoration and the sides located opposite the latter; and ...

Prawdzik does not show these features and therefore does not anticipate independent claim 6.

The Examiner is of the opinion that Prawdzik shows these features at line 56 of column 8 through line 9 of column 9. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Instead, Prawdzik discloses using rollers during low-pressure continuous lamination to press a decorative sheet to a supporting substrate. As already discussed, Prawdzik discloses providing a decoration on a sheet, and then attaching the sheet to the substrate. Prawdzik does not disclose a *decoration printed onto one or two sides of a board*, as recited in the claimed invention.

Moreover, Prawdzik, in the passage cited by the Examiner, discloses that rollers can be used to attach the decorative sheet to the substrate. Prawdzik only discloses a

roller in one other place in the specification: in the Background section when discussing low-pressure continuous lamination. Thus, Prawdzik only describes the use of a roller for pressing a decorative layer to a substrate. However, Prawdzik does not disclose using a screen roller to spread a synthetic resin layer onto the sides of the board, as recited in the claimed invention. There is simply no disclosure in Prawdzik of printing a decoration onto a side of the board and using a screen roller to spread a synthetic resin layer onto that side of the board. Therefore, Prawdzik does not contain each and every element of claim 6 and does not anticipate the claim.

Dependent claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, and 18

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, and 18 depend from an allowable independent claim, and are allowable based upon the allowability of the independent claim.

Moreover, Applicants submit that Prawdzik does not contain many of the features of the dependent claims. For example, Prawdzik does not disclose a decoration printed on the underside of a support board, as recited in claim 2. The Examiner is of the opinion that Prawdzik discloses this at lines 10-18 of column 9. Applicants respectfully disagree, and submit that Prawdzik merely shows the application of a backing sheet to the surface opposite the decorative sheet. The skilled artisan will recognize that a backing sheet is not a decoration printed on a support board. A backing sheet is merely a sheet used for added support, and would not have a decoration. Also, Prawdzik makes no mention whatsoever of a decoration applied to the underside of the board, much less printed on the underside of the board.

Applicants further submit that Prawdzik does not disclose that the decoration is covered by two layers of synthetic resin, as recited in claim 3. The Examiner asserts that Prawdzik discloses the use of corundum particles. Applicants do not disagree. However, the Examiner does not even address, and Prawdzik simply does not disclose, two layers of synthetic resin covering the decoration.

Applicants further submit that Prawdzik does not anticipate claim 14. The Examiner, in rejecting claim 14, has failed to consider and address the features of claim

4, from which claim 14 depends. Thus, the Examiner has failed to show that the applied reference contains each and every feature of claim 14.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 1-3, 6, 7, 10, 14, 17, and 18 be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 4, 5, 8, 11-13, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Prawdzik in view of U. S. Patent No. 3,192,294 issued to Streed et al. ("Streed"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner bears the initial burden of factually supporting any *prima facie* conclusion of obviousness. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. MPEP §2142.

The Examiner asserts that the applied prior art teaches or suggests all of the features of the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because the applied references do not teach or suggest each and every feature of the claims.

As discussed above, Prawdzik does not disclose all of the features of independent claims 1 and 6. Specifically, Prawdzik does not disclose a decoration printed on a support board. Streed does not compensate for the deficiencies of Prawdzik.

Instead, Streed discloses a method for molding a plastic sheet such that it has a deeply textured surface, such as that reminiscent of pile carpeting. Streed discloses supporting a dry resin 12 on a belt 18 during a molding process (FIGS. 1-3) to produce a final resin layer 12 with embossed detail 18 (FIG. 4). Streed does not disclose a support board with a decoration printed thereon. Therefore, Prawdzik and Streed, alone

or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the elements of independent claims 1 and 6, and of claims 4, 5, 8, 11-13, 15, and 16 which depend therefrom.

Applicants further submit that the applied references do not teach or suggest a relief corresponding to the decoration, as recited in claim 4. Applicants agree with the Examiner that Prawdzik does not disclose a relief. The Examiner asserts that Streed teaches providing a relief. However, the Examiner does not even address the feature of the relief corresponding to the decoration, as recited in claim 4. Simply put, neither Prawdzik nor Streed shows a relief that corresponds to a decoration that is printed on a support board.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 4, 5, 8, 11-13, 15, and 16 be withdrawn.

Other Matters

The title of the invention has been amended to more accurately reflect the invention.


Added Claims

New claims 19 and 20 further define Applicants' invention and are believed to be patentably distinct from the applied art and in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas GRAFENAUER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Calderon', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew M. Calderon
Reg. No. 38,093

May 31, 2006
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191